EPA Receives Request for Experimental Permit to Combat Mosquitoes

EPA received an application for an Experimental Use Permit (EUP) that would allow Oxitec to study the use of specialized mosquitoes to help in reducing mosquito populations. The agency is sharing a description of the experiment with the public for a 30-day comment period.

Aedes aegypti mosquitoes can spread several diseases of significant human health concern, including the Zika virus and dengue fever. Oxitec's proposal would help to advance research into ways of reducing these mosquito populations.

The Center of Disease Control has said that "preventing bites from insects and ticks is vital to stopping the spread of vector-borne diseases, and more prevention methods are needed."

Commented [BI1]: Susan Jennings got this quote from their website. She said she could give them a heads up if we choose to go with it.

"A successful trial with the Oxitec genetically engineered mosquitoes could mean the availability of a new tool in the fight against the Aedes aegypti mosquito for not only our District, but for Mosquito Control Districts around the country," said Andrea Leal, executive director for the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District.

Commented [BI2]: Andrea gave us permission to use this quote.

Oxitec is proposing to release specialized male mosquitoes into the environment to mate with wild female mosquitoes. Male mosquitoes do not bite people. These males would be modified in such a way that causes their offspring not to survive to adulthood so that ultimately mosquito populations are suppressed. Oxitec's proposed experimental program is designed to take place over 24 months in Harris County, Texas, and Monroe County, Florida. View the proposal (link).

After review of public comments EPA will decide whether to issue or deny the EUP request and, if issued, the conditions under which the study is to be conducted.

Public comments about this proposed EUP should be submitted to EPA-HQ-OPP- XXX- XXXX on or before October X, 2019.